Minimum Wages Act in mines in Central sphere during 1998-99 as many as 3671 inspections were carried out in which 44806 irregularities were detected, 1547 employers convicted, 394 claim cases disposed of and an amount of Rs. 38.45 lakhs awarded.

Irregularities in PF Accounts

†3352. SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that irregularities are being committed in the accounts of provident fund of the employee by some higher officers in Orrisa; and

(b) if so, the action being taken against such guilty officers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) It is reported that there were fraudulent withdrawals from PF account of the subscriber by impersonation in the Regional EPF Office Bhubaneswar and Sub-Regional Office Berhampur.

(b) Preliminary investigation in the matter has been carried out and consequently one UDC and one Section Supervisor have been placed under suspension on account of their suspected connivance with outsiders in the case.

Losses due to Labour Unrest

3353. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Labour unrest causes Rs. 923 crore loss" as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated 9th June, 2000;

(b) if so, whether the country is suffering losses worth crores of rupees every year due to labour unrest;

(c) if so, the details of States which are more prone to labour unrest and whether Government have drawn any plans to check such labour unrest; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

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†*Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to provisional information the production loss as a result of strikes and lockouts during 1999 was Rs. 632 crores.

(c) During 1999 Tamil Nadu recorded the maximum number of strikes & lockouts followed by West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat.

(d) For fostering harmonious relations between the workers and the management, have Government has been covening Tripartite Meetings to consider the views of various social partners on important issues concerning them. The conciliation machinery has also been strengthened and several strikes have been averted as a result of timely intervention of the Government.

Low Wages

3354. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the minimum daily wages fixed by Government and State Governments for the labourers is very low in the light of rise in the prices of essential commodities;

(b) if so, whether government propose to increase these wages; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT AFFAIRS (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) In accordance with the provisions of Minimum Wages Act, 1948, both Central and the State Governments are the "appropriate Government' to notify, fix, review and revise the minimum wages of the workers employed in the scheduled employments. The State/Union Territory Governments were asked to take into account the basic needs like food, clothing, rent, fuel, lighting and other miscellaneous requirements such as children education, medical requirement, minimum recreation, provision for old age etc. while fixing/revising minimum wages as per recommendations of the Indian Labour Conference in 1957 and Supreme Court judgement. Further, there is a provision for Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA) linked to Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a component of minimum wages. The Central Government as well as 20 State Governments have already made provision of VDA linked to CPI so as to protect the interests of workers